

## INEEL earns highest DOE safety award for having low injury/illness rate

For the second year in a row, the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory was been recognized in October 2003 with the U.S. Department of Energy's **Star of Excellence** -- one of the nation's highest awards for safety performance. The award recognizes INEEL for having an injury/illness rate at least 75 percent lower than the average in its industry code - as determined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.



"This award is an acknowledgment of the wonderful efforts of our employees, and that we have the momentum to take our safety to even higher levels of achievement," said Dick Watkins, INEEL vice president of Environment, Safety, Health and Quality Assurance.

The award is part of DOE's Voluntary Protection Program, used throughout the DOE complex to encourage workers to participate in and "own" the safety processes in their workplaces.

The "Star of Excellence" signifies that INEEL met annual DOE-VPP goals and demonstrated strong involvement in VPP mentoring and community outreach.

INEEL representatives received the award in Washington, D.C., at a recent ceremony.

"The award is further recognition of INEEL's emphasis on and continual improvement of safety and health," Watkins said.

In addition to this year's "Star of Excellence" award from DOE, the INEEL in May 2001 became the first DOE national laboratory to receive "Star" status under the DOE VPP. "Star" status signifies an injury and illness rate 50 percent below the national average for an organization's industry code. Since then, it has continued to be one of the largest employee groups in the nation to earn and maintain the coveted VPP Star status.

The INEEL's safety policy -- "All operations at the INEEL are performed in a safe, compliant and environmentally responsible manner" - is carried out through all levels of the work force, and the "Star of Excellence" recognizes a safety culture that works, Watkins said.

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